



DE MEEVAART

Changes in the Neighborhood



Activating the Elderly at De Meevaart

Next Steps Report

Introduction

Stitching De Meevaart is a community center in the Indische Buurt community of Amsterdam. In a city of roughly 23,000 people, De Meevaart opens its doors to a multicultural and multilingual population with over 100 languages spoken within. It is a place founded on the idea of possibility, where the people of the community are empowered to facilitate their own dreams.

In response to an invitation by Nooshi Forozesh, director of Stichting De Meevaart, Connect Consulting conducted an exploration of the organization's process for engaging elderly people in the Indische Buurt community of Amsterdam. Connect Consulting is a team of experienced professionals with broad knowledge and diverse skill sets. As an approach to work, they leverage clients' expertise to implement change, connecting people to collective possibilities. For this exploration, Elizabeth Spagnoletti-Hecker, Sunmolu Hamilton-Samuel, Courtney Burstin, and Samantha Morales, partners at Connect Consulting, were led by Rob van Veelen, the client representative and project manager at De Meevaart. The contract between De Meevaart and Connect Consulting was initiated on Friday, November 2, 2018 and ended Friday, November 9, 2018. Included in this contract was a proposal for data gathering, feedback, and recommendations. This report summarizes the work and findings conducted at De Meevaart, by Connect Consulting, subsidiaries of The Firm, an organization development consulting group.

Data

To gain a solid understanding of the problem, data was collected by way of interviews and observations. Interviews were conducted with 23 people, including staff, volunteers, elderly of Indische Buurt, community members, community organizations, and local politicians. Also, observations of the environment inside and outside De Meevaart were made during several community walks and visits to the center.

Through a reflective and dialogic process, data was sorted and analyzed to emerge the key themes. Findings showed that while De Meevaart encouraged members of the community to be empowered to facilitate their own programs at the center, the elderly were not

activated to realize their own programs at De Meevaart. This realization surfaces a paradox between the desired and current state of the organization. If De Meevaart is encouraging participation of all members of the community, including the elderly, why aren't they utilizing the center? To address this finding Connect Consulting conducted a two-hour feedback meeting and intervention.



This Gap Analysis model is used to surface a system's desired state, contrast this to the current state, and identify the gap or barriers preventing realization of the desired state.

Intervention

Common dreaming. Common dreaming is an ideal, described by Rob, as the way people in the Indische Buurt community can connect, share, and act. This ideal is symbolic of the spirit of the Indische Buurt community, a neighborhood steeped in warmth, community, diversity, connection, and service. With a community full of people who are willing to help others and themselves, there is not a shortage of people to mobilize around a cause. Inside and outside De Meevaart, people are organizing to make the community a great place to live for everyone. Getting them together to connect, share, and act on behalf of the elderly members of their community emerged as the best option for addressing the client's request.

A two-hour intervention was proposed and held Thursday, November 8, 2018 attended by:

Connect Consulting

Rob van Veelen (Project Manager, De Meevaart)

Ruud Fiere (Indische Desk Administrator, Buurt Balie)

Karima (Community Member, De Meevaart)

Sasha Schoonhoven (Local Administration, City of Amsterdam Oost)

Frits De Wolff (Elderly Participation Broker, De Meevaart)

Through this intervention, the participants explored the desired and current state of elderly engagement at De Meevaart and made meaning of the gap that exists between what De Meevaart wants for the elderly in the community and what is happening now. This process of exploration led to the identification of actionable items that the participants felt they were willing and able to implement. The goal of implementation was to transform the condition of the elderly at De Meevaart from not activated to activated. Additionally, the participants were offered a process for coordinating and activating future initiatives.

Below are the ideas generated through discussion regarding the current and desired states, as well as, the gap:

CURRENT STATE

- not activated
- disconnected in communication
- isolated
- language barrier
- non-Dutch barrier
- festivals and gatherings
- come out for photo exhibit because of special transportation
- too much talk, a lot of ideas, but not enough doing
- no facilitation of ideas, ACTION
- transportation is a problem
- concentration of people Flaavopoort and meets all needs
- disconnect between older and younger generations
- connectedness, inclusive, welcoming atmosphere
- lack of knowledge about De Meevaart
- lack of knowledge goes in both directions

GAP

- connecting people to De Meevaart
- lack of new ideas (variety)
- elderly expectations
- unknown
- time
- communication
- too traditional
- transportation
- trust
- stubborn
- policy
- people need to be engaged
- translators
- language barrier

DESIRED STATE

- just do it
- facilitators of sessions, workshops, gatherings,
- sense of history
- past and present
- connectedness
- younger and older
- warmth
- common dreaming
- activated elder
- happiness
- sense of hope
- feeling useful, values
- living to live

The themes that emerged from discussion of the gap were: personal connection, patience, time, policy, volunteer cooperation and expectations, and mantelzorger.

Recommendation

The following recommendations were co-created by the participants and consultants. Moving forward participants have agreed to complete the workplan, describing each activity, assigning a responsible party and a date of anticipated completion. The status column is provided to note milestones achieved as each work item is completed. Participants agreed to follow-up with Connect Consulting within 30 days to provide updates on their progress.

De Meevaart – Indische BuurtBalie Work Plan

Engaging the Elderly				
Activity	Description	Responsible	Date	Status
Develop survey		Regine, Rob, Frits		
Survey for elders		Nooshi, Students		
Focus Groups – Use survey questions to guide discussion		Eliz, Fatima, Manon		
Connections				
Bring an elder to school				
Events around eating and meeting				
Buddy system				
“Get Out of Your Bubble” Week	Old and young people meet			
Indische BuurtBalie in Flevopoort				
Under 30 and over 60 encounters				
Meevaart Mates: Bring one new person				
Multiple generation house	Elderly – children day care center			
Volunteer				
Rewards for volunteers				
Volunteer 4 hours every week				
Educational programs for volunteers				
Facilitation/Process				
Transportation from site to site				
Uber for Elders				
Special transportation between Flevopoort and De Meevaart				
Bring the right people into the right place to connect				

De Meevaart – Indische BuurtBalie

Facilitation/Process				
Activity	Description	Responsible	Date	Status
Organize events for elderly to come together to talk about their lives				
Gather perspective of the elderly people				
What is “the new” for the elderly?				
Career / Life Coach				
Relive Your Life and Plan What’s Next				
Bucket List				
Discover what they like: past and present				
Discover their skills				
Bring an elderly person to an event or De Meevaart to connect				
Service at a very young age				
Create opportunity to mix the generations for connections				

Closing

In closing, it was an honor to work with you. Thank you for welcoming us into your community and trusting us to be of service to. We look forward to hearing from you about your progress.